

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

I am adamantly opposed to the loosening of ownership restrictions of media outlets. Such action would further diminish the already weak and inattentive coverage of local news and activities. It would also further lessen the chances of having a broad perspective of views on important issues -- national, state, and local -- without which the American public is at the mercy of a few major, self-interested businesses as we seek the information we need to be an informed electorate. Or maybe that is just what the FCC and the Federal government want -- an uninformed and passive public.

In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

The studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative effects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you for your consideration of the PUBLIC'S INTEREST.

Terrence J. Dugan